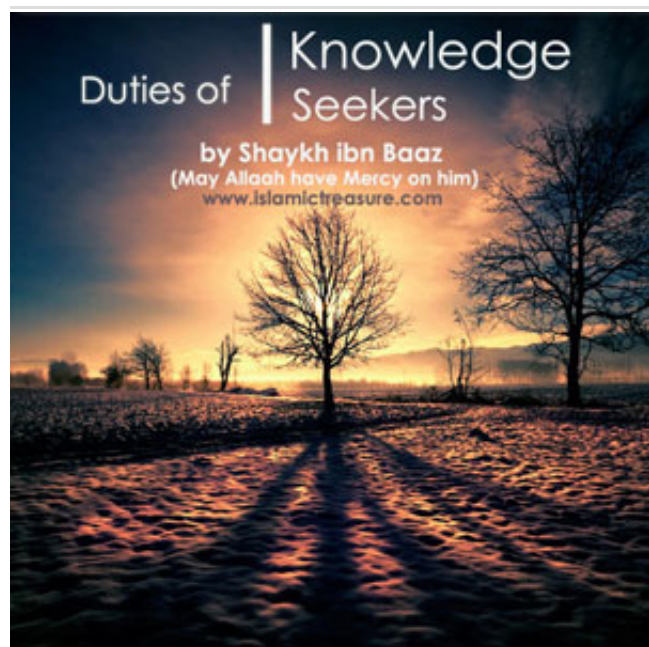


Duties of Knowledge Seekers



(This article is the transcript of a lecture delivered by His Eminence Shaykh ibn Baaz (May Allaah have Mercy on him) in the College of Sharia', Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, Riyadh, 1410 A.H. It was published in the "Collection of Fatwas" by His Eminence, part 7, p. 213. It was also published in the Islamic Research Journal, issue no. 47, ed. 1417 A.H.)

All praises be to Allah Alone. We praise Him, seek His Assistance, ask Him for forgiveness, we seek refuge with Allah from our evil and bad deeds. Whoever Allah guides, no one would lead him astray. I witness that none has the right to be worshiped but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger and Servant, peace be upon him, family, Companions and all those who followed him rightly.

O you who believe! Fear Allâh (by doing all that He has ordered and by abstaining from all that He has forbidden) as He should be feared. [Obey Him, be thankful to Him, and remember Him always], and die not except in a state of Islâm [as Muslims (with complete submission to Allâh)]. [**Qur'aan 3:102**]

O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person (Adam), and from him (Adam) He created his wife [Hawwâ (Eve)], and from them both He created many men and women; and fear Allâh through Whom you demand (your mutual rights), and (do not cut the relations of) the wombs (kinship). Surely, Allâh is Ever an All-Watcher over you. [**Qur'aan 4:1**]

O you who believe! Keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him, and speak (always) the truth. He will direct you to do righteous good deeds and will forgive you your sins. And whosoever obeys Allâh and His Messenger (ﷺ), he has

indeed achieved a great achievement (i.e. he will be saved from the Hell-fire and will be admitted to Paradise). **[Qur'aan 33:70-71]**

To proceed: Dear brothers in the Cause of Allah! Dear honorable sons! I thank Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) as He endowed me to attend this meeting and ask Him (Glorified and Exalted be He) to make it a blessed meeting, benefit us all from it, set right our deeds and hearts and to guide us to the Right Path. Allah's blessings are uncountable and his virtue is endless. Allah is the Only One Who gives all blessings as Allah says (Exalted be He): And whatever of blessings and good things you have, it is from Allâh. **[Qur'aan 16:53]** and: And if you would count the favours of Allâh, never could you be able to count them. **[Qur'aan 16:18]**

We thank Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) and ask Him to bestow more of His bounties upon us, you and Muslims all over the world.

Dear brothers and sons in the Cause of Allah, the topic of my talk – as you heard – is: “Duties of knowledge-seekers toward society.” This topic is serious and the duty of the knowledge seeker is also great and it varies according to the degree of knowledge he has, to the need of people for it and according to his ability and capacity.

Knowledge seekers have a duty toward themselves to prepare themselves for education, invite people to Allah, perform duties and pay much attention to knowledge, comprehend religion, review religious proofs and pay much attention to them. Knowledge seekers should have a large account of religious evidence and know the views of scholars, their points of difference and they should know the preponderant points of difference through evidence from Allah's Book and the Prophet's Sunnah without imitating any one. Any one can imitate but imitation does not imply knowledge. The renowned Imam Abu 'Umar ibn 'Abdul-Bar, author of Al-Tamhid and other books said: “Scholars agreed that whoever imitates is not a scholar.” Knowledge seekers have an important duty that is expected from them to pay much attention to evidence and to do their best to know the evidence of matters and rules from the Holy Book and the Noble Sunnah and from the well-established rules and to have strong evidence, and have thorough knowledge of the scholars' views. Knowing the views of scholars helps them to understand the evidence, deduce rulings and distinguish

between the preponderant and the less correct opinion.

On the other hand, knowledge seekers have to be sincere to Allah (May He be glorified), act as if Allah sees them and to make their intention focused on pleasing Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He), to perform their duty, to avoid erring, and to benefit the people without seeking any money or reward in this life as only hypocrites and those like them seek this life. They should not seek to be faltered or to be famous but to benefit Allah's servants and to please Allah (Exalted be He) and be sure of the soundness of every thing they say regarding Fatwas (legal opinions issued by qualified Muslim scholars) or any other matter. They have not to show any slackness in following any of the instructions of Shari`ah (Islamic law) lest others should imitate them.

If they are teachers, students shall imitate them, if they are Muftis, people shall accept their Fatwas and if they are Du`ah (callers to Islam), the matter will be really serious and if they are judges, the matter will be even graver.

Knowledge seekers should do their best to please their Lord and to be sincere to Him, truthful in seeking to please Him and be careful to a large extent to know and examine the legal evidence till they reach the evidence. They should make Fatwa based on sure knowledge, invite to Allah with sure knowledge, teach the people with sure knowledge and enjoin goodness and forbid what is bad with sure knowledge as Allah (Exalted be He) says: Say (O Muhammad ﷺ): "This is my way; I invite unto Allâh (i.e. to the Oneness of Allâh – Islâmic Monotheism) with sure knowledge" [**Qur'aan 12:108**]

Any one who does not have sure knowledge is not considered a scholar, and does not benefit the people in inviting to Allah or others in religious affairs. I mean the real fruitful benefit though this kind of people may benefit the people with some advice or a question that the memorize or by providing a material benefit.

Rather, the real benefit of the knowledge seekers is the result of their truthfulness, sincerity, their abundant knowledge, patience and struggling.

There is an important issue; the duty of the seekers of knowledge is to teach and spread knowledge. Scholars are as the heirs of the messengers. No one ignores the fact that messengers have had a high rank; they were the leaders, they guided the nation and they were the causes of the nation's happiness and

safety. Scholars took over the duty after the messengers and assumed their role in inviting to Allah (Exalted be He) and teaching. Muhammad (peace be upon him) was the seal of the prophets so after him remains only conveying and explanation of the Shari`ah, inviting to it, explaining it and spreading it among people. Only scholars whom Allah (Exalted be He) guided assume this role; they invite to Allah and guide leaders through their words, deeds and their concealed and revealed attitudes.

Therefore, their duty is really serious and they are exposed to a great danger and they are responsible for the nation as the nation is in very bad need of conveying the message and having it explained by all possible means.

Today, there are many ways including the readable, audible and visual mass media as they have a serious effect on leading the people astray or in guiding them. Also, Friday Khutbah (sermon), feasts, occasions, seminars, festivals for any reasons have serious impact as well as independent bulletins, compiled books and messages.

Thanks to Allah, there are many and easy ways today but the calamity arouses when the will of knowledge seekers weakens, their activity abates, they keep away and do nothing about this great calamity. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: And who is better in speech than he who [says: "My Lord is Allâh (believes in His Oneness)," and then stands firm (acts upon His Order), and] invites (men) to Allâh's (Islâmic Monotheism), and does righteous deeds, and says: "I am one of the Muslims." [**Qur'aan 41:33**]

In this life, no one in speech is better than them and ahead of them are the noble messengers and prophets (peace be upon them all), then the scholars.

When they have much knowledge, attain absolute piety and fear Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He), the benefit shall be greater and conveying the message about Allah (Exalted be He) and His Messenger (peace be upon him) shall become more complete. In the contrary, when piety is reduced, knowledge becomes scant and the fear of Allah is reduced or one is preoccupied with the concerns and cares and desires of this life. Thus, this knowledge and good will thereby be reduced. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه و سلم): "This is my way; I invite unto Allâh (i.e. to the Oneness of Allâh – Islâmic Monotheism) with sure knowledge, I and whosoever

follows me (also must invite others to Allâh i.e. to the Oneness of Allâh – Islâmic Monotheism with sure knowledge). [**Qur'aan 12:108**]

Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) explains that the mission of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is to invite to Allah (Exalted be He) on sure knowledge and He commands the Prophet (peace be upon him) to convey that to the people. Allah (Exalted be He) commands the Prophet (peace be upon him) to say to the people "This is my way...", meaning that this is the way I am on; the Shari`ah (Islamic law) and this my way of speaking and working, my approach and way to Allah.

So scholars have to follow the way of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) which is to call people to the way of Allah with sure knowledge. This is the way of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and all his followers.

A person shall not be considered a true follower of the Prophet (peace be upon him) unless he follows this way. Whoever invites to Allah (Exalted be He) with sure knowledge, disdains atheism, and keeps on the right path, will be considered a true follower of the Prophet (peace be upon him). So Allah (Exalted be He) says at the end of the same Ayah (Qur'anic verse): And Glorified and Exalted be Allâh (above all that they associate as partners with Him). And I am not of the Mushrikûn (polytheists, pagans, idolaters and disbelievers in the Oneness of Allâh; those who worship others along with Allâh or set up rivals or partners to Allâh)." [**Qur'aan 12:108**]

The truthful Da'ee (caller to Islam) is the one who follows the Prophet (peace be upon him) with sure knowledge and is not a liar or a person who speaks about Allah (Exalted be He) in ignorance what is not apt for Him. On the contrary, a truthful Da'ee describes Allah (Exalted be He) with Perfect Attributes, shows that Allah is unlike any of His creatures, believes in the Oneness of Allah, is sincere to Him and disowns Shirk (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship) and Mushriks (those who associates others with Allah in His Divinity or worship).

A Da'ee has to announce the Oneness of Allah, keep to His Shari'ah (Islamic law), describe Allah (Exalted be He) as being unlike His creatures and with what He describes Himself and with what His Prophet (peace be upon him) described Him in a way that suits His Majesty and Might and does not imply any Tamthil (likening Allah's Attributes to those of His Creation) or Ta'til (denial of Allah's

Attributes).

Thus, a Da'ee is to believe completely in Allah's Attributes and Names without any Tamthil or Tashbih (comparison). At the same time they are to avoid Ta'til.

They should describe Allah (Exalted be He) with His Divine Names and Him with His Fine Attributes mentioned in the Holy Book and the authentic Sunnah without Tahrif (distortion of the meaning), Ta'til, Takyif (questioning Allah's Attributes), Tamthil, increase or decrease. They are followers not innovators and they follow the Right Path that the messengers and their followers followed before and then the followers in righteousness and at the head of them is Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), his household and Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) and their followers in righteousness headed by the famous Imams after the companions as Imam Malik ibn Anas, Imam Muhammad ibn Idris Al-Shafi'y, Imam Abu Hanifah Al-Nu'man ibn Thabit, Imam Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Hanbal, Imam Al-Awza'y, Imam Sufyan Al-Thawry, Imam Is-haq ibn Rahawayh, and other Imams of knowledge and guidance that followed the right path in confirming the Names and Attributes of Allah and describing Him as being unlike His creatures.

Also, knowledge seekers are to be extremely careful not to conceal any thing from what he learnt. He should be careful to reach the Right, reply to the enemies of Islam, do not go easy with matters and not to be secluded in the arena as much as he can. If Islam's enemies appear to liken or deny the Attributes, they should appear to reply about that in writing and by speaking and by any other suitable means. They have not to say these misconceptions can be handled by somebody else "not me", but they should handle them by themselves. If there were other Imams, they would not leave the issue. They should be distinguished and not secluded. They should appear at the appropriate time to make what is right and victorious and to reply to the enemies of Islam in writing or in other forms through radio, newspapers, television or through any other possible way. They should not conceal the knowledge they have but should write, address the people in Khutbahs, talk and reply to innovators in religion and to other enemies of Islam with what Allah (Exalted be He) provided them with might according to their knowledge and the facilities Allah provided to them. Allah (Exalted be He) says: Verily, those who conceal the clear proofs, evidence and the guidance, which We have sent down,

after We have made it clear for the people in the Book, they are the ones cursed by Allâh and cursed by the cursers. Except those who repent and do righteous deeds, and openly declare (the truth which they concealed). These, I will accept their repentance. And I am the One Who accepts repentance, the Most Merciful.
[Qur'aan 2:159-160]

We have to contemplate these two great verses. Allah warns us against concealing knowledge, threatens and curses whoever does this. Then Allah shows that one can evade this threat and curse through repentance, reform, openly declaring (the truth which they concealed) and repentance for past negligence, sins, reforming the conditions that they could not reform by themselves and declaring the knowledge they might have said but they have concealed or did so for a temporary gain or false interpretation. If Allah guides them, their repentance would be only considered through this declaration and only through this repentance would they be safe. It also implies repenting from any past negligence and sins, giving up the sin while fearing Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) and fearing His Punishment.

There is a third condition: truthful intention not to repeat that again. Rather, they should declare their repentance so that people follow their example. There is another matter that is related to scholars before Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He), then before his brothers, colleagues and society; they have to fear Allah (Exalted be He) in themselves. As soon as they know any thing, they should hurry to apply it. They should know and apply and not linger in that. They should always reckon themselves, do their best to apply Allah's Verdicts on themselves both the obligatory and the non-obligatory till they represent knowledge in their ethics, deeds, biography, in his knowledge seminars, Khutbahs, travels, stay, in land, in sea, in the plane or in any place as this is a matter that concerns them. They should be careful to provide their brothers, colleagues and students with their knowledge and deeds. Hence, our Prophet's (peace be upon him) Da'wah was complete in theory and application. His biography is the best of biographies, his words are the best next to Allah's (Glorified and Exalted be He) and his manners are the best manners. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: And Verily, you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) are on an exalted (standard of) character. **[Qur'aan 68:4]** His manners were application of the Qur'an as `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said that the Prophet (peace be upon

him) applied the Qur'anic commands and forbade what it forbade, applied its ethics, considered its great examples and stories and called the people to that.

Scholars have to take Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as a good example in this great manner, be truthful to Allah (Exalted be He) in their sayings and deeds, to convey Allah's command and what He forbids, to enjoin good and forbid evil as much as possible, to do their best to advise those in charge by guiding them and their neighbors and all the society and all people by every means as much as they can. They should not neglect any of these teachings, especially nowadays as there is a lack of scholars, evil is widespread, and there is mischief in the entire world; in both Muslim and non-Muslim countries. Every one, who has sure knowledge, knows about the great evils broadcast in the radio stations, newspapers, televisions, news bulletins and books to lead people to Hell fire.

The armies are led by the enemies of Islam who use a variety of dangerous means and spread them amongst Muslims and non-Muslims to destroy them and lead them to the Hellfire and to make them share their bad ethics and hateful biography and to accompany them in Hellfire, as their leader so desires. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: Surely, Shaitân (Satan) is an enemy to you, so take (treat) him as an enemy. He only invites his Hizb (followers) that they may become the dwellers of the blazing Fire. **[Qur'aan 35:6]**

So knowledge seekers should not be secluded and take care only of themselves. They have duties toward themselves and duties toward others in conveying, declaring and inviting to Allah. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: Invite (mankind, O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) to the Way of your Lord (i.e. Islâm) with wisdom (i.e. with the Divine Revelation and the Qur'ân) and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better. **[Qur'aan 16:125]** and: ...but invite them to your Lord **[Qur'aan 22:67]** Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) commands the Prophet (peace be upon him), to invite the people to Him and this command is for us all not only for prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) only. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) is commanded, the command is for him, all of us and all the scholars except when it is proven by evidence that the command is for the Prophet (peace be upon him) alone.

O Servant of Allah do not be lazy or secluded. You have to convey the

Commands of Allah (Exalted be He) to the Servants of Allah. You have also to advise whoever you can in every place; the village chief, the village scholar, the village guide and whoever is in charge of the village and in towns, and in any place where you communicate with the people in a good way, advise them, direct them to good, cooperate with them in goodness and piety, good manners, in sermons and in good words gently and not with violence.

In the same way, you should cooperate with the Great Imam of the country (i.e. the ruler) and with ministers and judges in carrying out their duties. You should also cooperate with Du`ah and your brothers in the Cause of Allah.

This is the way, scholars must be as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Religion is based on advising one another. Upon this we said: For whom? He replied: For Allah, His Book, His Messenger and for the leaders and the general Muslims. **(Related by Muslim, no. 82, in his Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith).**

Moreover, it is related in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) on the authority of Jarir ibn `Abdullah Al-Bajaly (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: I gave the pledge of allegiance to Allah's prophet (peace be upon him) on the observance of Prayer, payment of Zakah, and sincerity and well-wishing for every Muslim. **(Related by Muslim, no. 83 and al-Bukhari, no. 55)**

In addition, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: May Allah brighten (the face of) a person who hears my words, comprehends them, and then conveys them as he has heard them; for perhaps the one informed comprehends more than the one who heard. **(Sunan Ibn Majah, Book on Rituals of Hajj, no. 3056 and Musnad Ahmad vol. 4, pg. 80)**

In another wording: ... many a bearer of knowledge is not versed in it. **(at-Tirmidhi no. 2656, Sunan Ibn Majah, no. 3660 and Musnad Ahmad vol. 5, pg. 183)**

Yet in another wording: ... many a bearer of knowledge conveys it to one who is more knowledgeable than they are. **(at-Tirmidhi no. 2658, Sunan Ibn Majah, no. 232 and Musnad Ahmad, no. 16312)**

Moreover, in one of his Khutbahs the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Those

who are present should convey it (this information) to those who are absent, as the informed one might comprehend it (what I have said) better than the present audience who will convey it to them. **(Sunan Ibn Majah, no. 5124)**

People will remain enjoying goodness as much as they cooperate in righteousness and piety with their kings, princess, judges, Du`ah and with all Muslims provided that they consider good ways, gentility and wisdom. It is related in a Sahih Hadith that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: Whoever is deprived of forbearance and gentleness is, in fact, deprived of all goodness. **(Related by Muslim, no. 4695, in his Sahih Book of Hadith)** on the authority of Jarir ibn `Abdullah and `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her).

In a Hadith Marfu` (a Hadith narrated from the Prophet with a connected or disconnected chain of narration) that is narrated by `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her), the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Allah is kind and He loves kindness and confers for kindness what He does not confer for severity and does not confer upon anything else besides it (kindness). **(Related by Muslim, no. 4697)**

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said in a Sahih Hadith: Kindness is not to be found in anything but that it adds to its beauty and it is not withdrawn from anything but it makes it defective. **(Related by Muslim, no. 4698)** Yet it is sufficient in this regard to mention that Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: Invite (mankind, O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) to the Way of your Lord (i.e. Islâm) with wisdom (i.e. with the Divine Revelation and the Qur`ân) and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better. **[Qur`aan 16:125]** and: And by the Mercy of Allâh, you dealt with them gently. And had you been severe and harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you. **[Qur`aan 3:159]**

It is worth mentioning that when Allah (Exalted be He) sent Musa and Harun (Moses and Aaron, peace be upon them both) to Fir`aun (Pharaoh) He (Glorified and Exalted be He) said to them: "And speak to him mildly, perhaps he may accept admonition or fear (Allâh)." **[Qur`aan 20:44]**

I ask Allah with His Beautiful Names and Supreme Attributes (Glorified and Exalted be He) to guide you, all Muslims and me to what pleases Him. May He guide us all to His Right Path and provide us all with useful knowledge to work

with it and to follow legal ethics and the great manners which Allah praised his prophet (peace be upon him). We have to mention the Prophet's Hadith: Whoever travels on a road in search of knowledge, Allah will cause them to travel on one of the roads of Paradise. (**Muslim, no. 2699, at-Tirmidhi, no. 2945, Sunan Ibn Majah, no. 225 and Musnad Ahmad vol. 2, pg. 252**)

So, knowledge seeking and comprehending religion is great. We have also to mention the Prophet's Hadith: If Allah wants to do good to a person, He makes them comprehend the religion. (**Related by Al-Bukhari, no. 71, and Muslim, no. 1037**, on the authority of Mu`awiyah, may Allah be pleased with him). This great Hadith signifies that comprehending religion is a clear proof indicating that Allah (Exalted be He) wants to do good for a Servant and the one who does not comprehend religion is forsaken and Allah (Exalted be He) does not want to do him good. There is neither might nor power except with Allah! We ask Allah (Glorified be He) to guide us all to what it pleases Him, make us die as Muslims, set right all Muslims' conditions, appoint their rulers from amongst their best, make their leaders good, increase the number of Du`ah, and grant them all comprehension of religion acting according to the Sunnah of our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Allah knows best. May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions!
